



Los Angeles County Commission for Women

B-50 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-1455 ofc./ (213) 633-5102 fax / laccw@bos.lacounty.gov e-mail



NOMINATION APPLICATION 29th ANNUAL WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

The nomination application is to include a biography of the nominee. Copies of this form can be downloaded from the Commission's website at <http://laccw.lacounty.gov>

NOMINEE INFORMATION:

NAME: _____ EMPLOYER: _____
ADDRESS: _____ JOB TITLE: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ WORK ADDRESS: _____
HOME PHONE: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
CELL PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____
E-MAIL: _____ FAX: _____

CRITERIA

Nominees must have worked on behalf of women's issues; made significant contributions to women's equality issues, and served as a role model for women. Previous members of the Commission may be nominated for their current professions and other activities relating to advocacy for women. Previous recipients are not eligible for this award. (See list at: <http://laccw.lacounty.gov>)

Applications for nominations within these categories may be received from the community and Commissioners. If applying in more than one category, a separate application is required.

NOMINATION CATEGORY (to be considered, choose only one appropriate choice)

Education _____	Health _____	The Arts / Media _____	Business / Labor _____	Law / Public Safety _____
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NOMINATION SUBMITTED BY: DECEMBER 20, 2013

NOMINATOR: _____ DATE: _____
ORGANIZATION: _____ PHONE: _____
JOB TITLE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____
ADDRESS: _____ CELL PHONE: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ FAX: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Women of the Year Awards Scholarship Luncheon

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PROCESS OF SELECTION

The Women of the Year Awards recognizes up to ten (10) women who are outstanding role models for over **4 million** women in the County of Los Angeles. District Awardees are selected by each Los Angeles County Supervisor and Community At-Large Awardees are selected by the Commission for Women in the following five categories: **Education, Health, Media/Arts, Business/Labor, Law/Public Safety**. All nominees will be rated on a scale of 1-4 for each of the following areas below. The highest overall score will receive the award nomination.

NOMINEE _____ CATEGORY _____

Please describe your Nominees participation in the following areas in relation to the category chosen:

1. *My nominee has worked on behalf of women's issues by:*

2. *My nominee has made significant contributions to women's equality issues by:*

3. *My nominee has served as a role model for women by:*

4. *How has your nominee demonstrated an attitude of empowerment, positively influenced and helped women to forge ahead:*

Reason(s) for Nomination, additional comments or more specifics:

Completed forms may be submitted to the Commission for Women at laccw@bos.lacounty.gov or

Mailed to:

**Los Angeles County Commission for Women
500 West Temple Street
Room B-50
Los Angeles, CA 90012**

1. *My nominee has worked on behalf of women's issues by:*

As Bloomingdale's Century City General Manager and a Member of the Downtown Women's Center (DWC) Board of Directors, Kathy inspires and advocates for women to better themselves and achieve success. At DWC, Kathy played a significant role in developing two MADE by DWC social enterprises - a café and gift shop and a resale boutique – that provide job-readiness training to homeless and extremely low-income women. Her expertise in the retail industry was essential in setting MADE by DWC's merchandise and sales goals. She was also a key member of the team that designed DWC's Education and Job Readiness Program, a community-based program that operates through the MADE by DWC social enterprises to provide education and vocational training opportunities to increase the self-sufficiency and personal stability of chronically homeless and low-income women on Skid Row. With Kathy's support, more than 25 formerly homeless women have re-established their self-esteem and gained the experience necessary to re-start a career, including one who has secured a position at Kathy's Bloomingdale's store.

2. *My nominee has made significant contribution to women's equality issues by:*

Kathy's commitment to economic equality for women is demonstrated through her daily work at Bloomingdale's, as well as her involvement and passion for DWC's Education and Job Readiness Programs. At Bloomingdale's, Kathy strives to develop women leaders in the retail field. At the Downtown Women's Center, Kathy is a crucial thought partner in the design and operation of MADE by DWC and its associated Education and Job Readiness Programs providing hands-on vocational and education opportunities for the homeless and low-income participants. Program participants discover their talents and develop marketable skills by participating in handcrafted product development workshops and an intensive 12-week job readiness program that includes topics such as food handling, inventory management, customer service, and entrepreneurship. Through this programming, Kathy has guided the Downtown Women's Center's initiative to not only aid those who are ready to return to full-time employment, but also provide alternative job opportunities and esteem-building to those unable to join the traditional workforce.

3. *My nominee has served as a role model for women by:*

Kathy is a mentor to women at both Bloomingdale's and the Downtown Women's Center, and she leads by example. As General Manager of Bloomingdale's of Century City, Kathy is a role model for women seeking to move up in the retail field. In addition, she identifies, hires, and retains talent, and four women who directly reported to Kathy have gone on to larger VP roles within the company.

Homeless women continue to represent nearly a third of Los Angeles' homeless population, which is the nation's largest. In direct response to the needs of homeless and low-income women living in downtown Los Angeles, Kathy contributed to the design of DWC's Education and Job Readiness Programs. Through educational and enrichment activities, workshops, classes, mentoring sessions, and job training, participants are able to build self-esteem, improve critical thinking skills, gain technological proficiency, and develop job readiness skills.

Furthermore, Kathy has managed to bridge her career and her passion for ending homelessness among women by rallying support for DWC among Bloomingdale's employees and customers, who conduct donation drives and volunteer projects for the Center.

4. *How has your nominee demonstrated an attitude of empowerment, positively influenced and helped women to forge ahead:*

Kathy continues to help and empower the participants of the Downtown Women's Center Education and Job Readiness Program by being there from start to finish. By rallying Bloomingdale's employees to teach participants in the Program about merchandising, inventory management, and customer service, she has helped the women of DWC to find their passion, build their self-esteem, and jump start their careers. This programming has led to internships at Bloomingdale's, and has resulted in one of the participants getting hired as a customer service associate. Although facing unfortunate circumstances and challenging situations, the women of Skid Row have been empowered by the work of Kathy Suto; she has given them hope and a chance to learn the necessary skills to regain self-confidence, re-enter the workforce, and re-build their lives.

Reason(s) for Nomination, additional comments or more specifics:

Located in the heart of downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row, the Downtown Women's Center (DWC) is the only local resource that is singularly dedicated to addressing the unique needs of homeless women. We serve those who are homeless, formerly homeless, or experiencing extreme poverty, as well as women who are coping with mental and chronic illnesses, physical disabilities, chronic abuse and domestic violence, and aging-related issues. Homeless women continue to represent nearly a third of Los Angeles' homeless population, which, at almost 23,000 in the City of Los Angeles and more than 58,000 in the County of Los Angeles, remains the largest in the country. On downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row, women comprise a third of the population. The majority of women we serve live on the streets or temporary shelters; 55% spent at least one night outside in the past year. According to a 2010 Downtown Women's Needs Assessment conducted on Skid Row, 68% of the women surveyed lacked a high school diploma or GED equivalent. Only 8% had college degrees, which was the lowest level since the survey's creation in 2001. Although some maintain low-wage jobs, almost 100% of our participants maintain income levels at or below 200% of the national poverty level. The aforementioned Needs Assessment found the following income streams among women surveyed: 36% General Relief, 33% Supplemental Security Income (SSI), 14% Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), 6% no income at all, and 1% Social Security Retirement; in addition, 21% reported losing government benefits over the last year. Of women surveyed, 90% did not believe there were employment opportunities available in the downtown area, and only 4% reported income from employment. As the only organization on Skid Row to exclusively serve women, DWC is in a prime position to make substantial strides toward addressing this dire problem.

In direct response to the needs of the homeless and low-income women living in downtown Los Angeles, DWC designed our Education and Job Readiness Program to 1) provide viable and accessible opportunities in educational and vocational development, 2) address compounding issues that act as barriers to personal and economic stability, and 3) create sustainable, long-

lasting, and ultimately cost-effective solutions that enable women to end the cycle of homelessness. Through educational and enrichment activities, workshops, classes, mentoring sessions, and job training, our participants are able to build self-esteem, improve critical thinking skills, gain technological proficiency, and develop job readiness skills.

As a direct result of Kathy's continued support, the Education and Job Readiness Program have been very successful. Our SET to Work program – an intensive 12-week job readiness training program wherein participants receive technical training in areas including inventory management, customer service, and food handling – has graduated 18 women in the past year. SET to Create – a handicraft product development program wherein women learn to create products, learn soft skills, and earn supplemental income – has helped 40 women earn income. And lastly, SET to Bake – a culinary training program that teaches professional and commercial baking skills to participants, who will in turn bake the products that are sold in the MADE by DWC Café – has begun training 6 women in its pilot program.

KATHY SUTO

Kathy Suto is Vice-President and General Manager of Bloomingdale's Century City. Kathy is responsible for increasing the ranking of the store from 6th to 3rd in the chain, achieving \$111 million in sales (projected) for 2013. The Century City store employs 450 associates, and is the West Coast flagship for the organization. Kathy received the West Coast 'Who made it Happen' award from Bloomingdale's in 2012.

Before joining Bloomingdale's Century City in 2007, Kathy spent 13 years with Neiman Marcus and most recently, was the Vice President and General Manager for Neiman Marcus Chicago. At Neiman Marcus, Kathy was responsible for developing and leading a team of 375 Senior, Selling and Support Associates to sales surpassing \$80 million.

Previous to this, Kathy held various positions in retail as the Director of Stores for Tootsies in Houston, Texas and Regional Director of Joan & David Helpen Inc. Kathy began her career in Pittsburgh working for May Company at Kaufmann's.

Kathy serves on the Board of Directors of the Downtown Women's Center and plays an integral role in raising funds in addition to donating her time. Through her involvement, Bloomingdale's Century City began selling the handmade merchandise made by the women of the DWC. One hundred percent of the profits raised from the MADE by DWC merchandise are donated to supporting ending homelessness for women on Skid Row.

Kathy was awarded the Women of Achievement Award by the Century City Chamber of Commerce in 2012.

Kathy holds a B.A. in Advertising from Penn State University and graduated from the Kellogg Management Institute of Northwestern University.

Kathy currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband John and dog Lucy.